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**Real Significance Of Online Breaking News:
Examining The Credibility Of Online Breaking News**

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Abstract

Real Significance Of Online Breaking News: Examining The Credibility Of Online Breaking News

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Breaking news implies that something urgent, important and newsworthy happened, assuming that viewers will be more curious about this event. As the mass media have continued to develop, the form of breaking news also keeps on changing. Today, the internet plays a primary role as a platform of breaking news. With online news services providing a plethora of real-time breaking news to audiences, there is a concern that online breaking news has little news value. Some scholars warned that the increase in the number of breaking news would finally impoverish the quality of journalism. Thus, this study tried to ascertain the credibility of online breaking news. This study conducted a 2 (news with/without breaking label) \times 2 (high and low news value) factorial-designed experiment.

The result of the experiment suggested that neither breaking news label nor newsworthiness would not increase or decrease the credibility rating. It would be possible to assume that there was no effect of such two components because audiences have already grown accustomed to the prevalence of the label breaking news and continual update of the headline of online news. Journalists might arbitrarily label specific news as breaking news, but they would keep in mind that calling something “breaking news” neither helps nor hurts.

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Chapter 1 : Introduction

Breaking news is meant to convey a sense of urgency, an implication that the breaking news stands out from other news stories. News providers assume that viewers will be more curious about this event (Carr, 1999). Indeed, if the label “breaking news” is shown in broadcast or online news, it is highly probable that audiences may automatically pay more attention to this kind of news than regularly reported news (Miller, 2003). In this situation, audiences believe that breaking news is much more important (Watson, 2005). Meanwhile, the gatekeepers who decide what news will be included in their own news sections tend to label “breaking news” arbitrarily (Lewis et al., 2005). For example, one newspaper editor said, “Our mission is to be the source of news and information online for our local market and that generally translates into local breaking news” (Robinson, 2006).

As mass media continues to develop and transform, so does the form of breaking news. Over the years, technology, society, and the news industry have changed dramatically, thus altering the content and presentation of breaking news (Miller, 2003, p. 17). The news media has always been quick to inform the public of incidents occurring that have significant impact on the world, say the JFK assassination or the 9/11 attacks. Before television, the medium for breaking news was the newspapers’ “Extra!” edition. The advent of radio and television improved the forms of breaking news, reducing the time to disseminate it and adding sounds and images. Nowadays, we see another primary

medium for breaking news—the Internet. In the week following 9/11, 27% of internet users got online news and 37% of users also consumed online news in the days after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2006). Naturally, scholars have paid a great deal of attention to breaking news. Several studies have examined the components of television breaking news and its influence on audiences (Miller, 2003; Miller & Leshner, 2007; Tuggle & Huffman, 2001; Watson, 2005). However, online breaking news still needs further investigation.

If online breaking news delivers little news value, audiences may feel deceived. Is this news truly worthy of the “breaking” moniker? Labeling it so may initially grab attention. However, if this is resorted to too often, then the credibility of online news will suffer, producing a “boy-who-cried-wolf” syndrome (Watson, 2005). Lewis and Cushion (2009) warned that the increase in the number of breaking news alerts on 24-hour news channels would impoverish the quality of journalism. With online news services providing a plethora of real-time breaking news to audiences, it would be meaningful to explore how significant online breaking news really is.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the credibility of breaking news on online platforms. It explores the theoretical implications of online breaking news in light of its newsworthiness and influence on the perception of credibility. This study conducts an experiment using an online news site. Participants are first asked to evaluate the news value of recently released breaking news and, based on this result, the news were divided into groups of high and low newsworthiness. Then, participants in the treatment group

read the stories labeled “breaking high/low newsworthy news,” while those in the control group read the same stories without the label. They were then asked to evaluate the credibility of the news.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

FRAMING

Media frames suggest how people think about particular stories. Previous studies have examined the effects of frames on audience reactions, including gain vs. loss (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), episodic vs. thematic (Iyengar, 1991), strategy vs. issue (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997) or human interest, conflict, and economic consequence frames (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). Such frames can directly affect “how audiences understand issues” (McLeod et al., 2002, p. 223).

Goffman (1974) explained that individuals understand and respond to events by relying on a schema of interpretation—a collection of anecdotes and stereotypes. A schema, according to Fiske and Taylor (1991, p. 98) is “a cognitive structure that represents knowledge about a concept or type of stimulus.” Goffman (1974) defined this schema as a frame. Frames explain the attributes of events. According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), the media frame is a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding string of events, weaving connections among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about or the issue’s essence. A widely accepted definition of media framing is “to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Framing can be achieved through the process of selecting news events for coverage and then producing the coverage (Gitlin, 1980;

Tuchman, 1978). Frames provide salience to audiences, by “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable” (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

Entman (1991) explained that individuals can construct, through mental representations resulting from contact with a news frame, an “event-specific schema.” An event-specific schema is “an understanding of the reported happening that guides individuals’ interpretation of initial information and their processing of all succeeding information about it” (Entman, 1991, p. 7). He also mentioned that there is an interaction between news frames and event-specific schemata. Such an interaction leads news organizations to shape their news to elicit reactions from readers, and these anticipated reactions from the public appear to follow.

The “breaking news” label may be salient for audiences at a glance and cause the story to stand out from its immediate context to become the center of attention (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). According to Fiske and Taylor, the process of understanding the role of such a label begins with the schema. When people encounter new information, they tend to try to understand it using their preexisting schema. Visual cues such as a label are prominent and readily available for immediate access (Posner et al., 1976).

In this study, news labeled “breaking” is a visual cue, physically distinguishable from other news. Such a label may lead to certain cognitive responses. For example, it could trigger a schema that leads audiences to recognize breaking news as different from the rest. Viewers are thus likely to evaluate such stories as being perhaps more valuable than other news (Watson, 2005). For example, when a tragic event occurs, breaking news

immediately reports where it happened and how many died. Audiences are expected to be curious and feel a sense of urgency (Watson, 2005). Thus, it is possible that even though the news content is the same, labeling it breaking may affect how it is perceived. In fact, Hogarth (1992) found that cable news channels tended to frame stories as urgent or developing even if they were not. If audiences consider this sort of news unworthy of such a label, the credibility of online news may be compromised.

CREDIBILITY

Previous studies have developed the concept of credibility and uncovered components associated with it (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Infante, 1980; Johnson & Kaye, 1998). The study of credibility can be divided into three parts: source credibility, media credibility, and message credibility (Metzger et al., 2003). The study of credibility started, in the persuasion process, by examining the impact of source credibility. Also as media technology has developed, media scholars have looked at media credibility to determine the relative credibility of particular media forms. Message credibility was also investigated at this early stage by media scholars who concentrated on characteristics of messages themselves that could affect the credibility.

Infante (1980) used three criteria to measure source credibility: trustworthiness, expertise, and dynamism. Gaziano and McGrath (1986), in describing newspaper and television news credibility, identified twelve dimensions: fairness, bias, completeness, accuracy, respect for privacy, watch for people's interest, concerns for community, separation of fact and opinion, trustworthiness, concern for public interest, factuality, and

level of training. Of these, scholars commonly focus on accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, and completeness of information (Gaziano, 1987). Johnson and Kaye (1998) used believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth of information to compare the credibility of online and traditional media. Flanagin and Metzger (2000) operationalized news credibility as a multidimensional concept stemming from five traditional factors: believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, and completeness. In sum, credibility is a multidimensional concept, although the dimensions identified vary from study to study (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986).

Among the several studies exploring media credibility, results differed somewhat. Based on Gaziano and McGrath's (1986) dimensions of news credibility, Abdulla et al. (2002) asserted that online news credibility had three primary aspects: trustworthiness, timeliness, and bias. They suggested that the credibility of print and television news was higher than online news; the quality of information found online was dubious. However, Cassidy (2007) gathered opinions about the perception of credibility from both online and print journalists and asserted that online news journalists, being more familiar with online news information, rated online news as significantly more credible than did their print counterparts. For one thing, online news can be reported whenever the accidents or issues occur, while traditional news media have tighter constraints. Also, Johnson and Kaye (2010) conducted longitudinal analysis of the change in the credibility about online presidential campaigns and found that online issue-oriented sources were more credible than traditional issue source.

Traditionally, studies of media credibility have supported the positive relationship between the usage of a particular medium and the rating of credibility (Whitney, 1986; Flanagin & Metzger, 2000; Johnson & Kaye, 1998). Audiences tend to trust information sources with which they are already familiar. Increases in media use were accompanied by increases in credibility rating, regardless the channel (Whitney, 1986). Kiouisis (2001) pointed out that the credibility perception about online news was influenced by online media use. He also measured online news credibility by assessing whether it was factual, concerned with making a profit, concerned about a community's well-being, or whether it invaded people's privacy. Another predictor of media credibility is personal involvement with the issues reported. The degree to which audiences already have knowledge and concern about specific topics may influence their judgment about media credibility. Gunther (1992) found that, with greater involvement in media, people who found issues to be personally relevant had a higher level of skepticism. Also, Flanagin and Metzger (2007) supported the idea that message salience and involvement bolstered perceived credibility.

Message credibility examines how message characteristics influence the perception of believability of either the source or the source's message. Studies on message credibility have paid attention to the organization and quality of messages: Unorganized messages were less credible than well-organized messages (Gass & Sieter, 1999). Breaking news written in haste might be unorganized, thus negatively affecting message credibility. Also, as perceptions of message quality rose, so did evaluations of

source credibility (Slater & Rouner, 1997). Slater and Rouner (1997) defined the quality of a message as being how well written a message is perceived to be. They asserted that if a message is well presented and plausible, it could have more impact on credibility. They also proposed that a favorable evaluation of credibility may be evoked by the style of message. Style comprises consistency of tone, uniqueness of voice, presence of attitude, level of formality, and so forth. A favorable evaluation of a message means that its reader perceives it to be well written. This study measures message credibility because it is of interest to know how audiences understand messages in breaking news and how they rate their relevant message.

Perceptions of online information credibility can decline due to inaccurate news stories, such as rumors via the internet getting reported as news (Nadarajan & Ang, 1999). Also, in a Web context, reporters are under increased pressure to report breaking news and to continually update stories, leading to a lack of time to verify. There have been many studies on the credibility of news media, such as print, radio, television, and the internet, but little attention has been paid to the relationship between news values and the credibility of breaking news. The difference in news value among various breaking news pieces might account for the difference in the perceptions of credibility.

NEWSWORTHINESS AND NEWS VALUE

Some researchers have examined the concept of newsworthiness (Shoemaker et al., 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) suggested that

newsworthy events are both deviant and socially significant. Events covered by breaking news may be highly newsworthy and urgent. To establish the process of being news, a basic assumption about news needs to be set: “news is new information about a subject of some public interest that is shared with some portion of the public” (Stephens, 1988, p. 9). Examples of public interest could be environmental threats or events that hold some social or cultural significance from the past. From the dawn of human civilization, humans have routinely looked out their environment and informed others because many variations like predators and natural disasters could pose potential threats to them. This innate nature of news, the gathering and dissemination of news, might explain its surveillance function (Shoemaker, 1996).

Journalists select which events to report and which to ignore. But, in general, journalists have struggled to explain exactly how they evaluate an event’s newsworthiness (Pritchard & Hughes, 1997). Galtung and Ruge (1965) introduced indicators of news values: relevance, timeliness, simplification, predictability, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, elite people and nations, and negativity. Shoemaker et al. (1987) offered these indicators of newsworthiness: timeliness, proximity, importance, impact or consequence, interest, conflict or controversy, sensationalism, prominence, novelty, and oddity or the unusual. These indicators suggest something happening that is different from people’s day-to-day lives. As noted, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) pointed out that events that are both deviant and socially significant will be prominent in news coverage and assumed to be the most newsworthy.

For example, if a mayor were accused of being addicted to cocaine, this event would contain two newsworthy components – deviance and social significance. Events that are deviant but not socially significant still garner prominent coverage; however, an event that is low in deviance yet socially significant, such as an official speech by the President, is accorded little or no coverage.

Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) put forward three forms of deviance: normative deviance, statistical deviance, and social change deviance. Normative deviance happens when an act violates formal norms, such as a crime or changes in how things ought to be done. An example of normative deviance is an act of terror. Statistical deviance refers to things that are unusual, odd, or novel, as well as anything that is either above or below average. Examples of statistical deviance could include the birth of septuplets or a person being discovered alive after surviving weeks in a collapsed building. Social change deviance deals with threats to the status quo, like civil demonstrations resulting in a new presidential election.

The function of a new medium can determine news selection. Brighton and Foy (2007) suggested a new news value system in order to reflect electronic news culture which has been increasingly going live with breaking news stories. Those are relevance, topicality, expectation, unusualness, and worth. These components are derived from Galtung and Ruge's (1965) news value. The first, relevance, is the significance of an item to an audience. For example, a small overnight fire in San Francisco would be of automatic interest for someone living there; for others it would have little to no interest.

The second quality, topicality considers how such news is new, current, and immediately relevant. Topicality can work best online because online news sites continually update news topics unhindered by restrictions of time and place. The third quality, expectation, asks whether the audience expects to be told about such news. Any events which would likely affect the equilibrium of society, like a sex offender living in the neighborhood and a bomb factory in a suburban housing development project, fall under this category. Next, unusualness inquires what it is about such news that sets it apart from other events that go unreported. This concept is quite closely connected to statistical deviance. Anything out of the norm can be named an unusual topic. Finally, worth means that such kind of news can justify its appearance. For example, audiences tend to be interested in reading about celebrities and elites. This concept can encompass Galtung and Ruge's elites.

BREAKING NEWS

Connoting immediacy, breaking news is unexpected and unplanned (Miller, 2003). For journalists, breaking news is the event they have to publish or broadcast as soon as possible. The origin of breaking news was a 1938, now-famous broadcast of Orson Welles's *War of the Worlds*. The fabricated news story of aliens attacking the earth compelled thousands of listeners stay in front of their radios, laboring under the false impression that it was real. When John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, the television broadcast of the event was urgent, but the spread of information surpassed reporters' ability to gather it (Zelizer, 1990). In 1980, CNN started to air the first 24-hour

news station, allowing viewers quick access to news from around the world. The 24-hour news cycle has created the prioritizing of “immediacy” over more traditional forms of the medium (Lewis et al., 2005). When 9/11 happened, audiences watched on TV updated news all day. These watershed moments could explain the significant role of breaking news (Miller, 2003). Nowadays, the three big broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) and cable news channels like CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News Channel, provide two to three breaking news alerts each day (Watson, 2005). In sum, breaking news manifests human’s innate need to survey the environment and identify possible threats (Miller, 2003).

Conceptualizing what actually warrants breaking news requires clear agreement. But journalists may arbitrarily determine the release of breaking news (Lewis et al., 2005). Lewis and Cushion (2009) conducted content analyses to compare differences in the coverage of breaking news between BBC and Sky News. They observed that the two news outlets commonly covered only 24% of the topics that they labeled breaking news. The authors confirmed the idea that there was little consistency about whether such topics warranted being called breaking news; they also confirmed that the distinction is usually ambiguous between breaking news and plain news. Such random labeling of breaking news might result from the news industry’s emphasis on speed and competition. If one news outlet reports some issue as breaking news first, it is assumed that they beat the competition.

Journalists should select breaking news prudently. Otherwise, viewers will eventually become wary of reporters announcing “breaking news.” Viewers may think that there is now more exciting content in breaking news than there used to be. But Lewis and Cushion (2009) criticized the over-labeling of breaking news; such stories are fairly run-of-the-mill and rarely include spontaneous event-driven stories. Also, such news lacked editing. It is problematic because the overuse of the breaking news might value immediacy over the quality of information.

Journalists have conceded that going to “breaking news” might keep journalists and thus audiences from fully understanding the stories being told. Online news continually updates new stories covering different aspects of a single event, initially identified as breaking news (Saltzis, 2012). The updating process of online news is less restricted by technical issues than traditional news and depends on journalistic routines and practices. Saltzis (2012) examined six UK online news sites to investigate patterns of online news updating by measuring the frequency of updates, the amount and type of information added, as well as sources. He observed that continual updating continued even after the main event had been clarified. Rosenberg and Feldman (2008) criticized journalists’ obsession with the diminishing time devoted to finding out what truly happened. This criticism is highly related to the overuse of breaking news because the initial publicity of online breaking news is insufficiently newsworthy. Lewis and Cushion (2009) pointed out that breaking news has become a familiar convention, and major news stories like terrorist attacks or tsunamis would be no more typical of breaking news

stories than plain news stories.. Also, the authors insisted that breaking news, which was driven by “being the first to report,” meant information processing with little thought and consideration. Lewis et al. (2005) found that many breaking news stories were, most of the time, a matter of routine news reporting.

Few studies have examined the effect of online breaking news on audiences, though traditional breaking news studies have suggested that live reports of breaking news stories proffered television news a sense of having greater importance and authority than newspapers (Chang & Lemert, 1968). Miller and Perlmutter (2004) found that viewers were more likely to pay attention to breaking stories when they regarded those stories as being relevant to their lives. Miller (2003) supported the notion that breaking news stories continued to garner the attention the stories normally deserve. Those clues suggested that just labeling the news content “breaking” could affect how the audience perceived the news. Based on this assumption, this study combines the concepts of newsworthiness and credibility of breaking news to explain how the presentation of breaking news could affect online journalism.

Because this study aimed at conducting an experiment to measure audience’s perception of credibility, two hypotheses and a research question were set.

H1: Controlling for the frequency of online news use and issue involvement, news stories labeled as breaking news will be rated as significantly more credible than those without that label.

H2: Controlling for the frequency of online news use and issue involvement, newsworthy breaking news will be rated as significantly more credible than non-newsworthy breaking news.

RQ: Controlling for the frequency of online news use and issue involvement, Is there an interaction between newsworthiness and the labeling of breaking news on credibility?

Chapter 3 : Methodology

This study conducted an experiment to investigate how credibility is affected by the interaction of a breaking news label and newsworthiness. This study used a between-subject, 2×2 factorial design. The first factor was news with/without breaking label, and the second was high/low news value. The dependent variable was the perception of the news' credibility. Frequency of online news use and involvement in news topics were used as covariates. Subjects were divided into four groups: breaking news/high news value, breaking news/low news value, plain news/high news value, plain news/low news value.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants (205) were gathered by Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk; <http://www.mturk.com>). MTurk is a crowdsourcing platform, providing a way for businesses or individuals to outsource, to a wide workplace, small tasks known as human intelligence tasks (HITs). It allows participants to earn sufficient rewards to value their participation in an experiment. Although such an outsourcing sample gathering in MTurk is not a random sample, Behrend et al. (2011) supported the idea that the reliability of the data from MTurk was as good as or even better than the convenience samples, like university student samples. In this study, participants who finished the experiment earned 70 cents.

The average age of participants was 34.46 (SD = 12.66); 45.4% were male while 54.6% were female. Over three-fourths (77.1%) were White, 8.3% were African American, 6.3% were Hispanic or Latino, 6.3% were Asian, and 2.0% were Native American. Among the participants, 10.2% had finished high school or less; 38.5% had some college or technical school degrees; 38.0% were college graduates, and 13.2% held graduate school degrees.

STIMULI

Prior to conducting the experiment, a manipulation check was performed on 43 participants, who did not participate later in the main experiment, to determine beforehand which stories would be of high or low news value. Participants read nine breaking news stories, gathered from real online news providers (e.g., *New York Times* and CNN; See Appendix 1). Per each one news article, participants were asked about their degree of agreement with the following set of statements: “This story is significant to me,” “I expected to be told about this story,” “This story could be considered to be breaking news,” “This story is important to me,” “This story is interesting to me,” “This story is well-written,” “This story is personally relevant to me,” “This story is unusual,” “The topic in this story deals with violation of laws or norms,” and “The topic in this story can be a threat to society” (Brighton & Foy, 2007; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006). A news value was measured with indices of the above 10 items using 7-point scales say from “(1) = strongly disagree” to “(7) = strongly agree” (See Appendix 2). A total of 36

paired sample t-tests were used to determine high/low news value. The three stories with the highest news value were selected as high news value stimuli; the three with the lowest news value were chosen as low news value stimuli. All three high news value stories exhibited significantly higher news value indices than all three low news value stories (See Table 1).

Table 1. Paired sample t-tests for 9 breaking news (df = 42)

	Paired sample	T-value
Pair 1	Woman hate crime vs North Korea nuclear	.60
Pair 2	Woman hate crime vs Man with suspicious letters	.84
Pair 3	Woman hate crime vs Gun legislation vote	.91
Pair 4	Woman hate crime vs Massive tornado	1.90
Pair 5	Woman hate crime vs Bangladesh woman	4.70***
Pair 6	Woman hate crime vs Apple's tax avoidance	5.11***
Pair 7	Woman hate crime vs U.S. economy growth	5.13***
Pair 8	Woman hate crime vs Curbing flight delay	7.43***
Pair 9	North Korea nuclear vs Man with suspicious letters	.10
Pair 10	North Korea nuclear vs Gun legislation vote	.31
Pair 11	North Korea nuclear vs Massive tornado	1.11
Pair 12	North Korea nuclear vs Bangladesh woman	3.56***
Pair 13	North Korea nuclear vs Apple's tax avoidance	3.99***
Pair 14	North Korea nuclear vs U.S. economy growth	4.92***
Pair 15	North Korea nuclear vs Curbing flight delay	7.94***
Pair 16	Man with suspicious letters vs Gun legislation vote	.20
Pair 17	Man with suspicious letters vs Massive tornado	1.12
Pair 18	Man with suspicious letters vs Bangladesh woman	4.36***
Pair 19	Man with suspicious letters vs Apple's tax avoidance	4.46***
Pair 20	Man with suspicious letters vs U.S. economy growth	4.41***
Pair 21	Man with suspicious letters vs Curbing flight delay	6.82***
Pair 22	Gun legislation vote vs Massive tornado	.97
Pair 23	Gun legislation vote vs Bangladesh woman	3.08*
Pair 24	Gun legislation vote vs Apple's tax avoidance	3.29***
Pair 25	Gun legislation vote vs U.S. economy growth	5.13***
Pair 26	Gun legislation vote vs Curbing flight delay	6.33***
Pair 27	Massive tornado vs Bangladesh woman	2.66**

(Table 1, cont)

Pair 28	Massive tornado vs Apple's tax avoidance	2.90**
Pair 29	Massive tornado vs U.S. economy growth	4.21***
Pair 30	Massive tornado vs Curbing flight delay	5.78***
Pair 31	Bangladesh woman vs Apple's tax avoidance	.52
Pair 32	Bangladesh woman vs U.S. economy growth	1.03
Pair 33	Bangladesh woman vs Curbing flight delay	3.71***
Pair 34	Apple's tax avoidance vs U.S. economy growth	.78
Pair 35	Apple's tax avoidance vs Curbing flight delay	3.26***
Pair 36	U.S. economy growth vs Curbing flight delay	2.51*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The three high news value stories were about the following: a hate crime involving a woman killing a man by pushing him onto the tracks of an oncoming subway train, a new assessment by the Pentagon reporting that North Korea had learned how to make a nuclear weapon small enough to be delivered by a ballistic missile, and a man suspected of sending threatening letters to senators. The three low news value stories were about a woman found alive two weeks after a building collapse in Bangladesh, a report of a 2.5% growth rate of the U.S. economy in the first quarter in 2013, and the Republicans claiming victory after passing a bill to curb flight delays. The stories' average number of words was 393.8 and the standard deviation was 4.58. Discarded were the other three stories—"Gun legislation vote," "Massive tornado" and "Apple's tax avoidance." In the real experiment, names, places, and other identifiable information were all changed. For example, the North Korea nuclear missile story was changed from North Korea to Croatia, and the rescued woman was changed from occurring in Bangladesh to India. Those stories would be totally different from the real ones because subjects would be needed not to consider them as out-of-date news.

Two news sites were created for the experiment, the treatment site had the breaking news label and the control site had plain headlines on their main windows; all other conditions were exactly the same, including title logo, navigation bar, sources on the overview page, and hyperlinks (See Appendix 3).

PROCEDURE

Randomly assigned to the breaking and plain news groups were a total of 205 subjects. Of these, 102 read all six stories in the breaking news treatment group (Breaking/High: 102, Breaking/Low: 102), while the other 103 subjects read all six stories in the control condition (Plain/High: 103, Plain/Low: 103). The order of the stories was rotated randomly by the software. Participants answered questions set on Qualtrics, an online survey platform (<http://www.qualtrics.com>).

After reading each story, participants were asked to evaluate the credibility of the story. At the end of reading and evaluating all six stories, participants answered questions about the frequency of their online news viewing and the degree of their involvement in the topics they read about. The usual demographics of gender, age, race and education were also collected.

Credibility was measured with a credibility index of six items: believability, reliability, fairness, objectivity, sensationality (reverse coded), and validity (Bucy, 2003; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986, Metzger et al., 2003) on a 7-point Likert scale from “(1) =

very unlikely” to “(7) = very likely” (Cronbach’s α : .900 for plain news, .922 for breaking news).

Frequency of online news use was measured by asking how many days a week subjects read online news sites on a scale from “(1) = never” to “(8) = seven.”

Issue involvement was measured with four questions on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “(1) = strongly disagree” to “(7) = strongly agree”: “When I read this story, I thought about what this topic meant to me and my family;” “When I read this story, I thought about how this topic is related to other things that I know;” “When I read this story, I thought about what this topic meant to other people;” “When I read this story, I thought about this topic over and over again” (Cronbach’s α for issue involvement: .912 for plain news, .933 for breaking news; Whitney, 1986; Flanagin & Metzger, 2007; see Appendix 2).

Chapter 4 : Results

H1 predicted that there would be a significant difference between breaking news and plain news in credibility, controlling for the frequency of online news use and issue involvement; it was not supported ($F = .033$, $df = 1, 409$, $p = .857$, $\eta^2 = .00$; see Table 2). The mean score of the credibility index for breaking news was 14.18 (SD = 2.23), while the mean score of the credibility index for plain news was 14.33 (SD = 2.09).

H2 predicted a significant difference between high and low news value stories on credibility, controlling for the frequency of online news use and issue involvement; it was not supported either ($F = 2.95$, $df = 1, 409$, $p = .077$, $\eta^2 = .01$; see Table 2). The mean score of the credibility index for high newsworthy stories was 14.12 (SD = 2.23), while the mean score of the credibility index for low newsworthy stories was 14.39 (SD = 2.08).

RQ1 asked whether there would be an interaction effect of the “breaking news” label and news value, controlling for the frequency of online news use and issue involvement. Analysis showed no interaction effects ($F = 2.59$, $df = 1, 409$, $p = .10$, $\eta^2 = .01$; see Table 2).

Although the two hypotheses were not supported and the research question showed no interaction, the covariate of involvement was significant in both H1 and H2 ($F = 49.42$, $df = 1, 409$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .11$; see Table 2). This means that the more involved one is in the issues, the higher credibility one attributes to the stories. This finding supports the notion of a relationship between issue involvement and message credibility.

The other covariate, frequency of online news reading, showed no significant relationship to credibility ($F = .02$, $df = 1, 409$, $p < .896$, $\eta^2 = .01$; see Table 2).

Table 2. Analysis of Covariance for news message credibility

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Frequency	.071	1	.071	.017
Involvement	206.271	1	206.271	49.419***
News value	12.324	1	12.324	2.953
Breaking labeled	.137	1	.137	.033
News value \times breaking labeled	10.826	1	10.826	2.594
Error	1686.273	404	4.174	
Total	1909.898	409		

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Chapter 5 : Discussion and Conclusion

DISCUSSION

This study tried to investigate how the credibility of online breaking news was affected by news with / without breaking news label and differences in news values. The first hypothesis was not supported, indicating that labeling stories as “breaking news” neither increases nor decreases the credibility rating. Lewis and Cushion (2009) suggested that the recent growth in breaking news was an example of a victory of style over content. But in this study it turned out that style resulted in no effects on audiences’ perceptions of credibility. Journalists might arbitrarily label something as breaking news, but these audiences would not consider such breaking news as more credible than plain news. It might be that because audiences have become inured to the breaking news label, removing its salient or unique quality. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine why there were no effects of the breaking label, but the study puts that forward as one possibility.

Neither was the second hypothesis supported, indicating that high or low newsworthy news fails to affect credibility. Perhaps audiences felt that low newsworthy stories were just as credible as high newsworthy news. More interestingly, there was no interaction between newsworthiness and being labeled “breaking” that affected credibility; this study had supposed, incorrectly, that high news value stories that were labeled breaking might be considered more credible. Metzger et al. (2003) suggested that

the way in which the message is presented may influence recipients' credibility rating, but the result was far from this proposal.

What this study did find was a significant and positive relationship between issue involvement and credibility. When individuals are highly involved in a news story, they are more likely to rate such a story as more credible. Issue involvement is not something that was manipulated in this study, but it was measured and used as a statistical control because every participant would have a different experience with and knowledge of each issue, and would therefore receive and understand such a news article differently. In fact, this positive relationship between issue involvement and the credibility has been shown in other studies (Gunther, 1992; Flanagin & Metzger, 2007). One conclusion we can draw from this finding is that the more involved audiences were in an online news topic, the higher credibility rating they gave it. Participants might have much trust for news topics that they felt relevant to their interests and knew much about.

CONCLUSION

Originally, this study was concerned with the overuse of the online "breaking news" labels. Miller (2003) raised this as an ethical question, warning that repeatedly labeling unimportant stories as "breaking news" might cause an avoidance effect. She emphasized that the newsworthiness of the stories should be considered in the labeling of breaking news. This study, however, shows that concern to be unfounded; labeling stories as breaking news had no effect at all on audiences' ratings of credibility; therefore, there

may, after all, be no harm in the practice. By the same token, these findings also show that nothing is to be gained by labeling a news story as breaking news. Arbitrarily labeling some articles as “breaking news” appears to neither help nor hurt the credibility rating. Also, the difference in the newsworthiness had no effect on the credibility rating.

While this study was not designed to discern why the labeling or news value did not affect credibility, it may be reasonable to assume that there was no effect because audiences have already grown inured to the prevalence of “breaking news.” Perhaps the overuse of this label has already made its impact on readers, making them immune to the label’s effects. This would seem to be supported by Watson’s 2005 findings that online news providers release breaking news two or three times a day. Continual updates of breaking news could be a unique strength of online news platforms, an advantage of technology characterized as having no restrictions in placement and time, but not if it has become so common that audiences are no longer affected by it. Also, Lewis and Cushion (2009) indicated that breaking news items had become predictable and routine. Breaking news would be hardly associated with high drama. The increased volume of news labeled “breaking” may lead audiences to assume that the distinction between breaking and plain news has become unclear (Lewis & Cushion, 2009). More research should be done to see if this study’s findings are replicated with different types of samples and to determine why this may be occurring.

Moreover, breaking news is usually placed at the center of online news sites, so audiences automatically feel that this is the main headline news. Also, audiences may feel

that such headline news is important and urgent at that moment. However, due to the continual update of different news topics, one online breaking news item may be replaced by another within a few hours. Thus, it is quite natural that online breaking news could be perceived similarly to other online plain news. Journalists then need not be overly concerned with frequently releasing stories as breaking news. They should be made aware that such activity neither increases nor decreases the credibility of the news contents.

This study has contributed to the literature on breaking news by showing that the label “breaking” does not affect audiences’ perceptions of credibility. Originally, Miller (2003) found that breaking stories on television garnered greater attention than traditionally presented stories. While not the same thing as garnering attention, increasing credibility is another important characteristic that labeling something “breaking” has aimed to effect. This study suggests that it does not. For the past 10 years, media circumstances have changed dramatically. More and more stories are being labeled “breaking;” some deserve the term and others do not. This study should be repeated and extended to include both credibility and attention as factors; perhaps stories labeled “breaking” do attract more attention, but that is not an intervening variable in assessments of credibility. Or perhaps the preponderance of the “breaking” label has numbed audiences to its uniqueness.

Another fruitful approach would be to incorporate latency measures, as time spent reading each news story would provide unobtrusive measures of the amount of attention

paid. This study did not measure how much time participants spent reading breaking news, relying on self-reports.

Breaking news has become quite prevalent in today's news culture. Lewis and Cushion (2009) warned that the rise in the release of breaking news might be in the process of shifting towards a more tabloid-style news agenda, impoverishing journalism. For better or worse, this study concludes that calling something "breaking news" neither helps nor hurts.

Appendices

Appendix 1 : News articles

1. Croatia May Have Nuclear Missile Capability, U.S. Agency Says (North Korea nuclear)

A new assessment by the Pentagon's intelligence arm has concluded for the first time, with "moderate confidence," that Croatia has learned how to make a nuclear weapon small enough to be delivered by a ballistic missile.

The assessment by the Defense Intelligence Agency, which has been distributed to senior administration officials and members of Congress, cautions that the weapon's "reliability will be low," apparently a reference to the Croatia's difficulty in developing accurate missiles or, perhaps, to the huge technical challenges of designing a warhead that can survive the rigors of flight and still detonate on a specific target.

The assessment's existence was disclosed Thursday by Representative Quincy Paul, Republican of Arizona, three hours into a budget hearing of the House Armed Services Committee with Defense Secretary Dennis Whiteside and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Brent C. Dunn. General Dunn declined to comment on the assessment because of classification issues.

But late Thursday, the director of national intelligence, Harrison P. Cobb, released a statement saying that the assessment did not represent a consensus of the nation's intelligence community and that "Croatia has not yet demonstrated the full range of capabilities necessary for a nuclear armed missile."

In another sign of the administration's deep concern over the release of the assessment, the Pentagon press secretary, Grady Valentine, issued a statement that sought to qualify the conclusion from the Defense Intelligence Agency, which has primary responsibility for monitoring the missile capabilities of adversary nations but which a decade ago was among those that argued most vociferously — and incorrectly — that Iraq had nuclear weapons. The report issued by the Defense Intelligence Agency was titled "Dynamic Threat Assessment 7099: Croatia Nuclear Weapons Program."

"It would be inaccurate to suggest that Croatia has fully tested, developed or demonstrated the kinds of nuclear capabilities referenced in the passage," Mr. Valentine said.

A spokesman for Bosnia and Herzegovina Defense Ministry, Bekim Milicevic, said early Friday that despite various assessments, “We have doubts that Croatia has reached the stage of miniaturization.”

“The primary objective is to consolidate, affirm the power,” Mr. Clapper told the House committee, adding that “the belligerent rhetoric of late, I think, is designed for both an internal and an external audience,” Bobby Stewart, the C.I.A director, said. “That’s why we are watching this closely.”

2. Arkansas Man Is Arrested in Sending of Suspicious Letters (Man with suspicious letters)

Federal agents arrested a man on Monday suspected of sending letters feared to be contaminated by the poison anthrax to an Arkansas senator, according to two officials with knowledge of the case. The suspect was identified as Adam Everett of Jonesboro, AR.

The arrest, two days after the letters were intercepted in mail-sorting facilities for the Capitol, was based on information collected “very early on” about who had sent the letters, said one of the officials. The letters contained a postmark from Memphis but no return address, Senate officials said.

The letters were signed: “I am KC, and I approve this message.”

The speedy arrests in the case may calm nerves in the nation’s twitchy capital, where it had begun to feel like the fraught weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, when anthrax-laced letters were mailed to media organizations and two Democratic senators, killing five people and making 17 others sick.

Late Wednesday morning, on Capitol Hill, the Hart Senate Office Building was shut down, with no one allowed to enter, but the building was not evacuated. Capitol Police officers were yelling at staff members in the hallways to get back in their offices.

“Apparently there was a package over there, and they said to walk, the way I have,” Senator Kris Walden, Democrat of Oregon, said as he left the Hart building heading to the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The Capitol Police confirmed that a suspicious package was found on the atrium level of the Hart building, as well as on the third floor of the Russell Senate Office Building.

They also said officers were talking to a man in the Hart building about the suspicious packages. The building was reopened a short time later.

Senator Alvin Morris, Democrat of Michigan, also released a statement on Wednesday saying a suspicious letter had been found at his office in Saginaw.

“Earlier today, a staffer at my Saginaw regional office received a suspicious-looking letter,” said the statement released by Mr. Morris’s office. “The letter was not opened, and the staffer followed the proper protocols for the situation, including alerting the authorities, who are now investigating. We do not know yet if the mail presented a threat. I’m grateful for my staff’s quick response and for government personnel at all levels who are responding.”

3. Chicago woman charged with murder as a hate crime in subway attack (Woman hate crime)

A 31-year-old woman was arrested on Saturday and charged with second-degree murder as a hate crime in connection with the death of a man who was pushed onto the tracks of an elevated subway station in Monroe and crushed by an oncoming train.

The woman, Mary Slaton, selected her victim because she believed him to be a Hindu, Brent A. Newman, the Chicago district attorney, said.

“The defendant is accused of committing what is every subway commuter’s nightmare: Being suddenly and senselessly pushed into the path of an oncoming train,” Mr. Newman said in an interview.

In a statement, Mr. Newman quoted Ms. Slaton as having told the police: “I pushed a Muslim off the train tracks because I hate Hindus ever since 2001 when they put down the twin towers I’ve been beating them up.” Ms. Slaton conflated Hindu and Muslim faiths in her comments to the police and in her target for the attack, officials said.

The victim, Karmjit Dubashi, was born in India and, according to a roommate, was raised Hindu.

Mr. Dubashi “was allegedly shoved from behind and had no chance to defend himself,” Mr. Newman said. “Beyond that, the hateful remarks allegedly made by the defendant and which precipitated the defendant’s actions should never be tolerated by a civilized society.”

Mr. Newman said he had no information on the defendant’s criminal or mental history.

“It will be up to the court to determine if she is fit to stand trial,” he said.

Ms. Slaton is expected to be arraigned by Sunday morning. If convicted, she faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. By charging her with murder as a hate crime, the possible minimum sentence she faced would be extended to 20 years from 15 years, according to prosecutors.

The attack occurred around 8 p.m. on Thursday.

Mr. Dubashi, was looking out over the tracks when a woman approached him from behind and shoved him onto the tracks, according to the police. Mr. Dubashi never saw her, the police said.

By the next morning, a brief video of the woman who the police said was behind the attack was being broadcast on news programs.

Patrol officers picked up Ms. Slaton early Saturday after someone who had seen the video on television spotted her on a Roosevelt street and called 911, said Scott Richmond, the chief spokesman for the Police Department.

4. Woman Found Alive 2 Weeks After Building Collapse in India, Officials Say (Bangladesh woman)

In a stunning development, a woman trapped for 15 days beneath the rubble of the collapsed Ronda Plaza building was discovered alive on Friday and then rushed to a nearby military hospital after rescuers pulled her out.

The woman, whose name is Majnula, had been in the basement of the collapsed building, where some areas were apparently protected from serious damage. Rescuers, speaking on live national television from the wreckage site, said they were clearing debris on Friday afternoon when they saw a pipe moving. It turned out to be Manjula, shaking the pipe from below, trying to gain attention.

“Save me!” rescuers heard her shout, before they pulled her into the afternoon light, her face powdered in dust as she was placed on a stretcher.

The Ronda Plaza collapse is now considered the deadliest disaster in the history of the garment industry. Five factories were operating inside the building when the structure pancaked downward. The carnage was horrific and has focused global attention on unsafe conditions in India garment factories that make clothing for North American and

European consumers — especially since there were advance warnings that the structure was unsafe.

The rescue of Manjula, as described by rescuers and government officials, has offered a temporary respite from the gloom and a startling tale of resilience: she survived in an opening maybe 10 feet by 8 feet in size, high enough for her to stand, within a penumbra of collapsed beams and pillars. Air trickled through the crevices. She found enough food and water to last until two days ago.

She found refuge in an unusually large space created by falling beams and pillars. Many survivors had been trapped in crawl spaces barely two feet high. But Manjula was in a space large enough for her to stand, sleep and walk, Major Hassim said.

“I never dreamed I’d see the daylight again,” she told local Somoy TV from her hospital bed, according to news accounts.

The Ronda Plaza death toll, now at 553, has been rising quickly in recent days. Ronda Plaza exemplified many of safety problems plaguing the garment industry in India, the world’s second-leading garment exporter, trailing only China. The authorities in India now say the building was illegally constructed, with permits obtained through political influence.

For now, though, a sliver of joy has been found in the wreckage, with the name of Manjula.

5. U.S. Economy Grew at 2.5% Rate in Second Quarter (U.S. economy growth)

Economic activity picked up in the second quarter of this year, with output expanding at an annualized pace of 2.5 percent, according to a Commerce Department report released on Friday. The number was a welcome improvement from the unusually sluggish growth at 2012, but significant government spending cuts and the pinch from recent tax increases look likely to keep the economy in stall speed in the months ahead.

“We just have not been able to hit escape velocity, to get us growing fast enough to make up for the ground we lost during the recession,” said Tony Olson, director and chief economist at ITG Investment Research. He forecasts growth around 2 to 2.5 percent for the rest of the year, which is slower than the economy’s long-term average. “Government spending is clearly a negative, but the reason why it’s such a strong negative is because there’s nothing else in the private sector really driving things forward.”

Economists noted that even the decent growth in the second quarter was probably somewhat overstated, with some of the improvement caused mostly by a rebound from the bare 0.4 annual growth rate in the fourth quarter of 2012 and the first quarter of 2013. Businesses drew down their back-room inventories at the end of last year, so they needed to replenish them at 2013. But that stockroom rebalancing appears to have restored inventories to acceptable levels and probably will not drive much more business spending growth later in the year.

Similarly, consumer spending was stronger in the second quarter, growing at its fastest pace since late 2010. But Mr. Olson discounted even that apparently good news because so much of the extra spending was in housing and utility costs, which could have been driven by unusually cold weather.

It also seems unlikely that consumers will spend as freely in the months ahead, economists said. Consumer sentiment and retailer reports suggest that households are starting to feel squeezed from the lapse of the two-year payroll tax holiday. That meant the Social Security tax rate rose 2 percentage points in January, adding about \$700 a year to the typical worker's tax bill.

Wage stagnation may also put a crimp in spending. Much of the job growth, after all, has been concentrated in relatively low-paying areas like food services and retail, and household incomes have been more or less flat since June, according to Centennial Report.

6. G.O.P. Claims Victory as Bill to Curb Flight Delays Passes (Curbing flight delay)

Congressional Democrats on Friday abandoned their once-firm stand that growing airport bottlenecks would be addressed only in a broader fix to across-the-board spending cuts, accepting bipartisan legislation that would bring the nation's air traffic control system back up to full strength.

With remarkable speed, the House overwhelmingly approved legislation to give the secretary of transportation enough financial flexibility to shift as much as \$253 million to the air traffic control system, less than a week after the onset of politically problematic flight delays driven by across-the-board spending cuts. The money will be shifted from airport improvement funds, and none would come from additional revenues, once a key demand of President Obama and the Democrats. The 361-to-41 vote came less than 24 hours after the Senate rushed the measure through.

Republicans claimed victory. "Consider that the Democrats' opening position was they would only replace the sequester with tax increases," Representative Eric Martin of West

Virginia, said in a memo to members before the vote. “By last night, Senate Democrats were adopting our targeted ‘cut this, not that’ approach. This victory is in large part a result of our standing together.”

The Congressional action effectively undoes one of the thorniest results of “sequestration,” the \$85 billion in spending cuts that took effect March 1 and have rippled across the federal government. With the president’s promised signature, Democrats will lose significant leverage they had hoped would force Republicans into a larger agreement since the flight delays were seen as the sort of inconvenience that could force a reversal of the cuts.

The action also brought charges that lawmakers known for gridlock could move only when affluent travelers like themselves felt the sting of Congress’s indecision and that the struggles of lower-income Americans affected by the spending cuts were being ignored. House members who have cleared precious little legislation this year made swift work of the air travel bill minutes before flying out themselves for a weeklong break, a pile of cars stacked up behind the Capitol waiting to ferry them to Washington’s airports.

“We’re leaving the homeless behind,” said Representative Walter Smoak, Democrat of Vermont. “We’re leaving a lot of National Guard folks behind. We’re leaving seniors who depend on Meals On Wheels in the dust. Children who rely on Head Start can teach themselves to read. That’s basically what’s happening.”

7. Senate Votes to Allow Debate on Gun Legislation (Gun legislation vote)

The Senate Thursday cleared the way for the debate on the first piece of major gun control legislation to be considered in that chamber in two decades. With families of victims of the Newtown massacre watching silently from the chamber, the Senate thwarted a threatened filibuster with a vote of 70 to 29 and will proceed next week to debate a package of legislation that, among a variety of other amendments, would expand background checks for gun buyers, increase the penalties for criminal sales and. Those include the renewal of the assault weapons ban which expired in 2004. Twenty-five Republicans voted against the measure, as did four Democrats.

“It’s remarkable,” said Senator Perry Scott, a Democrat from Connecticut whose nascent Senate career has been devoted to gun safety. “You can’t turn a corner in the Capitol this week without meeting a family of a gun violence victim. It’s hard to say no to these families.”

But the victory could be short-lived. The vote in no way guaranteed passage of the gun measure; some Republicans and Democrats who voted for this initial step made clear

they are not committed to supporting any final measure, even if they agreed to allow the debate.

“I am not sure I could have the courage to do what they did,” said Senator Kent Abernathy, Republican of Texas, who met with family members of the Newtown victims on Wednesday. “It really does have an impact.” Mr. Abernathy voted to debate the bill, but said he was unlikely to go further. “Is there anything I’ve seen so far that would move me to vote for new gun laws?” he said. “No.”

The coming weeks and even months will test both the resolve and the stamina of the families, who are both the best advocates for their cause and, in many ways, least equipped for its struggle.

“Every day is hard for me,” said Kris Johnson, the father of Daniel, who was killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School. “Making lunch for my kids is hard for me. Sleeping is hard. Waking up is hard. That being said, I just feel I need to be doing this.”

The bill will again need 60 votes to end the debate after consideration of contentious amendments offered by both supporters and opponents of new laws. Opponents of the measure could also try to filibuster individual amendments.

8. Apple Avoided Billions in Taxes, Congressional Panel Says (Apple’s tax avoidance)

Apple avoided billions in taxes in the United States and around the world through a web of subsidiaries so complex it spanned continents and went beyond anything most experts had ever seen, Congressional investigators disclosed on Monday.

The investigation is expected to set up a potentially explosive confrontation between a bipartisan group of lawmakers and Darren Cook, Apple’s chief executive, at a public hearing on Tuesday.

Congressional investigators found that some of Apple’s subsidiaries had no employees and were largely run by top officials from the company’s headquarters in Cupertino, Calif. But by officially locating them in places like Ireland, Apple was able to, in effect, make them stateless — exempt from taxes, record-keeping laws and the need for the subsidiaries to even file tax returns anywhere in the world.

“Apple wasn’t satisfied with shifting its profits to a low-tax offshore tax haven,” said Senator Larry Howard, a Georgia Democrat who is chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations that is holding the public hearing Tuesday into Apple’s

use of tax havens. “Apple successfully sought the holy grail of tax avoidance. It has created offshore entities holding tens of billions of dollars while claiming to be tax resident nowhere.”

Thanks to what lawmakers called “schemes,” Apple was able to largely sidestep taxes on tens of billions of dollars it earned outside the United States in recent years. Last year, international operations accounted for 61 percent of Apple’s total revenue.

Investigators have not accused Apple of breaking any laws and the company is hardly the only American multinational to face scrutiny for using complex corporate structures and tax havens to sidestep taxes. In recent months, revelations from European authorities about the tax avoidance strategies used by Google, Starbucks and Amazon have all stirred public anger and spurred several European governments, as well as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a Paris-based research organization for the world’s richest countries, to discuss measures to close the loopholes.

Still, the findings about Apple were remarkable both for the enormous amount of money involved and the audaciousness of the company’s assertion that its subsidiaries are beyond the reach of any taxing authority.

“There is a technical term economists like to use for behavior like this,” said Carl Leonard, a law professor at Stanford University and a former staff director at the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation. “Unbelievable chutzpah.”

9. At Least 29 Dead in Oklahoma Tornadoes, Medical Examiner Says (Massive tornado)

A giant tornado, a mile wide or more, killed at least 91 people, 20 of them children, as it tore across parts of Oklahoma and its suburbs Monday afternoon, flattening homes, flinging cars through the air and crushing at least two schools.

The injured flooded into hospitals, and the authorities said many people remained trapped, even as rescue workers struggled to make their way through debris-clogged streets to the devastated suburb of Moore, where much of the damage occurred.

Tina Ellington, the spokeswoman for the Oklahoma medical examiner, said at least 70 people had died, including the children, and officials said that toll was likely to climb. Hospitals reported at least 115 people injured, 50 of them children.

Numerous neighborhoods were completely leveled,” Sgt. Gary Trent of the Oklahoma Police Department said by telephone. “Neighborhoods just wiped clean.”

He said debris and damage to roadways, along with heavy traffic, were hindering emergency responders as they raced to the affected areas.

A spokeswoman for the mayor's office in Oklahoma said emergency workers were struggling to assess the damage.

"Please send us your prayers," she said.

Megan Hill, a spokeswoman for Integris Southwest Medical Center in Oklahoma, said 38 patients had come in by about 9 p.m. An additional 85 were being treated at University of Oklahoma Medical Center in Oklahoma.

"They've been coming in minute by minute," Ms. Hill said.

The tornado touched down at 1:56 p.m., 16 minutes after the first warning went out, and traveled for 20 miles, said Kelly Hart, a spokeswoman for the National Weather Service in Oklahoma. It was on the ground for 40 minutes, she said. It struck the town of Lamar and traveled about 10 miles to Moore.

Ms. Hart said preliminary data suggested that it was a Category 4 tornado on the Enhanced Fujita scale, which measures tornado strength on a scale of 0 to 5. A definitive assessment will not be available until Tuesday, she said.

Experts said severe weather was common in the region this time of year. But the region has rarely had a tornado as big and as powerful as the one on Monday.

Television on Monday showed destruction spread over a vast area, with blocks upon blocks of homes and businesses destroyed. Residents, some partly clothed and apparently caught by surprise, were shown picking through rubble. Several structures were on fire, and cars had been tossed around, flipped over and stacked on top of each other.

Appendix 2 : Manipulation check and Experiment questionnaires

Manipulation check

Consent to Participate in Internet Research

Identification of Investigator and Purpose of Study

You are invited to participate in a research study, entitled “examining credibility and newsworthiness of online news.” The study is being conducted by Joseph Jai-sung Yoo of The University of Texas at Austin, jjspriede@utexas.edu.

The purpose of this research study is to examine the credibility and worthiness of online news. Your participation in the study will contribute to a better understanding online news sites. You are free to contact the investigator at the above address and phone number to discuss the study. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

If you agree to participate:

- The experiment will take approximately 8 to 10 minutes of your time.
- You will complete an activity about the credibility and newsworthiness of online news.
- You will be compensated 70 ¢

Risks/Benefits/Confidentiality of Data

There are no known risks. You will get 70 ¢ for a reward. Your name and email address will not be kept during the data collection. Your information will be safely stored in a locked and password-protected computer.

Participation or Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas in anyway. If you do not want to participate either simply stop participating or close the browser window.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the study or need to update your information, contact the researcher **Joseph Jai-sung Yoo**, jjspriede@utexas.edu. This study has been processed by the Office of Research Support and the study number is [2013-04-0020].

Questions about your rights as a research participant.

If you have questions about your rights or are dissatisfied at any time with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Office of Research Support by phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Thank you.

Please evaluate the stories you just read on the following criteria.

	Strongly agree						Strongly disagree
This story is significant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I expect to be told about this story like this.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This story could be considered to be breaking news.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This story is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This story is interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This story is well-written.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
This story is personally relevant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The topic in this story is unusual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The topic in this story deals with violations of laws or norms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The topic in this story can be a threat to society.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Are you?

(1) Male

(2) Female

What year were you born?

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

(1) High school or less

- (2) Some college or technical school degree
- (3) College graduate
- (4) Graduate degree

What is your race or ethnic group?

- (1) Caucasian or White
- (2) African American
- (3) Hispanic or Latino
- (4) Asian American
- (5) Native American
- (6) Other _____

If you are willing to answer a few more questions, please enter your e-mail address;

Questionnaires used in the experiment

The story I just read is:

	A lot			Not at all			
Comprehensive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Believable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fair	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Objective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Valid	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unbiased	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sensational	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

How many days a week do you read online news?

Never	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, with 1 being “Disagree” and 7 being “Agree.”

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

When I read this story, I thought about what this topic meant to me and my family.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

When I read this story, I thought about how this topic related to other things that I know.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

When I read story, I thought about what this topic meant to other people.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

When I read this story, I thought about this topic over and over again.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Are you?

(1) Male

(2) Female

What year were you born?

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

(1) High school or less

(2) Some college or technical school degree

(3) College graduate

(4) Graduate degree

What is your race or ethnic group?

(1) Caucasian or White

(2) African American

(3) Hispanic or Latino

(4) Asian American

(5) Native American

(6) Other _____

If you are willing to answer a few more questions, please enter your e-mail address;

Appendix 3 : Layout of news sites

High news value stimuli

News site with a breaking news label



Plain news site



News site with a breaking news label

THE DAILY PRESS

BREAKING, WORLD, U.S. AND POLICAL NEWS

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BREAKING NEWS

Chicago woman charged with murder as a hate crime in subway attack



By Brevin Berkman Chicago, IL - A 31-year-old woman was arrested on Saturday and charged with second-degree murder as a hate crime in connection with the death of a man who was pushed onto the tracks of an elevated subway station in Roosevelt and crushed by an oncoming train. The woman, Mary Slaton, selected her [...]

SEARCH NEWS


Plain news site

THE DAILY PRESS

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SEARCH NEWS

News site with a breaking news label

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BREAKING NEWS

Arkansas Man Is Arrested in Sending of Suspicious Letters



By William Buck Jonesboro, Arkansas - Federal agents arrested a man on Monday suspected of sending letters feared to be contaminated by the poison anthrax to an Arkansas senator, according to two officials with knowledge of the case. The suspect was identified as Adam Everett of Jonesboro, AR. The arrest, two days after the letters were [...]

SEARCH NEWS

Plain news site

THE DAILY PRESS

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SEARCH NEWS

Low news value stimuli

News site with a breaking news label

THE DAILY PRESS

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HOME U.S. WORLD JUSTICE BUSINESS

BREAKING NEWS

Woman Found Alive 2 Weeks After Building Collapse in India, Officials Say



By Henna Parra India - In a stunning development, a woman trapped for 15 days beneath the rubble of the collapsed Ronda Plaza building was discovered alive on Friday and then rushed to a nearby military hospital after rescuers pulled her out. The woman, whose name is Majnula, had been in the basement of the [...]

SEARCH NEWS

Plain news site

THE DAILY PRESS

BREAKING, WORLD AND U.S. NEWS

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SEARCH NEWS

News site with a breaking news label

THE DAILY PRESS

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BREAKING NEWS

U.S. Economy Grew at 2.5% Rate in Second Quarter



By Samantha Jones N.Y. - Economic activity picked up in the second quarter of this year, with output expanding at an annualized pace of 2.5 percent, according to a Commerce Department report released on Friday. The number was a welcome improvement from the unusually sluggish growth at 2012, but significant government spending cuts and the [...]

SEARCH NEWS

Plain news site

THE DAILY PRESS

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SEARCH NEWS

News site with a breaking news label


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BREAKING NEWS

G.O.P. Claims Victory as Bill to Curb Flight Delays Passes



By Clement Anthony WASHINGTON — Congressional Democrats on Friday abandoned their once-firm stand that growing airport bottlenecks would be addressed only in a broader fix to across-the-board spending cuts, accepting bipartisan legislation that would bring the nation's air traffic control system back up to full strength. With remarkable speed, the House overwhelmingly approved legislation to give [...]

SEARCH NEWS

Plain news site

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SEARCH NEWS

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